

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Chapter One states an introduction which consists of six parts as follows:

1.1 Statement and Significance of the Problems

1.2 Goals and Objectives

1.3 Research Questions

1.4 Scopes and Limitations of the Study

1.5 Process of the Study

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### **1.1 Statement and Significance of the Problems**

Travel industry has played an important role in Thai economy. It brings in a high amount of yearly income to Thailand. At present, the travel industry in the country grows rapidly and the number of travelers from foreign countries all over the world have increased every year. These travelers are the main resource that brings about a great income for supporting the economic expansion of Thailand. Thai government's awareness of the importance of travel industry can be indicated by some campaigns, for examples, the years 1998 - 1999 were announced to be the "Amazing Thailand Years", and the year 2003 was marked as the "Amazing Thailand: experience variety". The campaign of the year 2003 was called "Unseen in Thailand" which focused on the tourist attractions that people have never seen or really known about. The presentation of the differences of Thailand from other countries such as the friendliness of Thai people, Thai ways of life, and the unique of Thai culture and tradition can attract the international tourists to come to the country. The mentioned campaigns have generated the increasing number of the international tourist arrivals to Thailand as shown in Table 1.1 (Tourism Authority of Thailand Statistical Report: 2003).

**Table 1.1** International Tourist Arrivals to Thailand During 1992 - 2002

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of arrivals</b>	<b>Average growth%</b>
1992	5,136,443	+0.97
1993	5,760,533	+12.15
1994	6,166,496	+7.05
1995	6,951,566	+12.73
1996	7,192,145	+3.46
1997	7,221,345	+0.41
1998	7,764,930	+7.53
1999	8,580,332	+10.50
2000	9,508,623	+10.82
2001	10,061,950	+5.82
2002	10,872,976	+7.31

Recently, a new campaign that is Rural or Community Based Tourism and Homestay has been introduced. This kind of tourism has served the government policy on developing rural community and expanding income to the locals. To support such a policy, the cooperation of the locals is needed. Rural tourism and homestay activities are divided into four kinds as follows:

1. Product sales such as local handicrafts products, local food, and travel resources in the community
2. Cultural shows such as local dance shows, local music shows, local story shows, etc.
3. Village based activities such as rafting, trekking, or bush walking with a local guide, etc.
4. Homestay or village based overnight stay activity

(Peterson, cited in Chuwit Siriwechakul, 2001)

Peterson (cited in Chuwit Siriwechakul, 2001) stated that one problem in setting up homestay tour in Thailand is the locals who deal with rural tourism and homestay activities are unable to communicate with foreign tourists. Miscommunication can lead to misunderstanding in some tourism information. Moreover, the tourists may not enjoy their trips and feel discouraged to come over again.

Umphang District is 675 kilometers far from Bangkok and 249 kilometers far from Tak Province. It is a border district adjoining Myanmar. The majority of population is Karen. Its topography is mountainous. The forest here is the original point of MaeKlong River. There are a

lot of beautiful waterfalls and cataracts in the area. Thus, many tourism activities such as rafting, trekking, and a study of nature can be conducted. These tourism activities are attractive to the tourists who love nature. According to the preliminary survey on the travel industry at Umphang District, it was found that travel industry here brought the locals greater amount of income than other occupations.

Rural Tourism and Homestay has been set up in Umphang District in 1999. It is initially introduced at Khotha and Umphangkee Karen Villages, and Umphang Folk House (See Maps 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Appendix D). According to the preliminary interview with the president of the Umphang Eco-tourism Club, the number of foreign tourists visiting Umphang District have increased. There were 1,533 persons in 2002, and 1,800 persons in 2003 (Umphang Eco-tourism Club Tourist Statistical Report: 2004).

Based on the preliminary interview with the secretary of the Umphang Folk House Club, most of the tourists who prefer a homestay tour are foreigners. The locals who deal with rural tourism and homestay activities have to provide tourism activities and services, including accommodation, food, traveling around the community, cultural shows, product sales, rafting, trekking and a study of nature. The tourists who would like to join a homestay tour have to stay with the owner of the house and join with his/ her family. It is therefore certain that language used to communicate with these foreign tourists is the main factor to be considered. If the homestay hosts and the locals who act as tourist guides cannot communicate with the foreign tourists, it can cause inconveniences to the tourists

English is an international language used to communicate with the foreign tourists here. To study the English needs of the locals, hereinafter referred to as “the local guides” in Umphang District, Tak Province is interested because this study can result the level of English needs and English uses in rural tourism and homestay activities. Thus, an effective syllabus of an English training course on Rural Tourism and Homestay can be designed for the local guides.

## **1.2 Goals and Objectives**

The purpose of this research is to study the English needs of the local guides who deal with rural tourism and homestay activities, and to design a syllabus of an English training course that corresponds to their needs. Therefore, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1.2.1 To investigate the level of English needs of the local guides.

1.2.2 To investigate the level of needs of each English skill that the local guides need for their work.

- 1.2.3 To investigate English language functions and topics on each skill that the local guides need for their work.
- 1.2.4 To investigate the opinions of the policy makers on the level of needs of English improvement and an English training course for the local guides.
- 1.2.5 To suggest a guideline for organizing an English training course on Rural Tourism and Homestay for the local guides.
- 1.2.6 To design a syllabus of an English training course on Rural Tourism and Homestay for the local guides.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This study was attempted to answer the following research questions:

- 1.3.1 To what extent do the local guides need English language for communication in the rural tourism and homestay activities?
- 1.3.2 To what extent do the local guides need each English skill for communication in the rural tourism and homestay activities?
- 1.3.3 To what extent do the local guides need language functions and topics on each skill in the rural tourism and homestay activities?
- 1.3.4 What are the opinions of the policy makers on the needs of English improvement and an English training course for the local guides?
- 1.3.5 What is a guideline for organizing an English training course on Rural Tourism and Homestay for the local guides?
- 1.3.6 What kind of syllabus that corresponds to the needs of the local guides who deal with rural tourism and homestay activities?

### **1.4 Scopes and Limitations of the Study**

This research was restricted to study the English needs of the local guides. It was a quantitative research by means of using questionnaires for collecting data. The limitations about the subjects for this study were as follows:

- 1.4.1 The first group was 119 local guides at Khotha and Umphangkee Karen Villages, and Umphang Folk House in Umphang District, Tak Province. They were on duty in the year 2004.
- 1.4.2 The second group was 83 policy makers who were concerned with planning the policy for Rural Tourism and Homestay at Umphang District, Tak Province. They were also on duty in the year 2004.

## 1.5 Process of the Study

In order to construct this study, the process of this study were as follows:

- 1.5.1 The problems with English use in dealing with rural tourism and homestay activities of the local guides were studied in order to construct the questionnaires.
- 1.5.2 Related literature and researches concerning English for specific purposes, needs analysis, and syllabus design were studied in order to use as a basis for constructing the questionnaires.
- 1.5.3 Two questionnaires were constructed. One was for the local guides. Another one was for the policy makers.
- 1.5.4 The questionnaires were examined for their validity by three qualified professors.
- 1.5.5 A pilot study was constructed in order to test for the reliability of the questionnaires.
- 1.5.6 The data were collected by using two questionnaires.
- 1.5.7 The obtained data were analyzed by using SPSS program.
- 1.5.8 The results were presented.
- 1.5.9 A guideline for organizing an English training course on Rural Tourism and Homestay was suggested.
- 1.5.10 A syllabus of an English training course on Rural Tourism and Homestay was designed corresponding to the obtained results.
- 1.5.11 The results of this study were summarized.
- 1.5.12 The discussion, conclusion, and suggestions were presented.

## 1.6 Definition of Terms Used

The terms used in the research are defined as follows:

Rural Tourism or Community – Based Tourism	A kind of tourism that needs the participation of the local people in the community for dealing with the tourism activities set for the tourists (Chuwit Siriwechakul, 2001)
Homestay	A kind of accommodation that is prepared by the local people and usually in their own house where the tourists will join some activities with their hosts such as having some meals, cooking, etc. (Mathuros Prapphairee, 2001)

Local guides	Local people at Umphang District, Tak Province who deal with rural tourism and homestay activities in the year 2004
Policy makers	Groups of people who were concerned with planning the policy for Rural Tourism and Homestay at Umphang District, Tak Province in the year 2004. They were the governor and vice governors of Tak Province, the director and deputy director of Tourism Authority of Thailand Northern Office Region 4, and the members of the Assembly of Sub-district Administrative Organizations, the members of the Municipality Organization, the committees of the tourism clubs, and the heads of the villages in Umphang District.
English for Specific Purposes (ESP)	English language skills, functions and topics used for particular purposes
English for Tourism	English language skills, functions and topics used for tourism
English Needs	English language skills, functions and topics that the local guides need for dealing with rural tourism and homestay activities
English Skills	Performance in listening, reading, writing and speaking of English, including translation skill
English Functions and Topics	English language functions and topics used in each particular situation of the local guides
Syllabus Design	Writing a syllabus – a teaching document consisting of the contents of the English language found from the study which will be the guidelines for designing course materials for the local guides

## **1.7 Anticipated Outcomes**

The results of the study were anticipated as follows:

- 1.7.1 The extent of English language needs of the local guides
- 1.7.2 English skills which are necessary for the local guides
- 1.7.3 Language functions and topics which are necessary for the local guides
- 1.7.4 The opinions of the policy makers on the needs of English improvement and an English training course for the local guides
- 1.7.5 A guideline for organizing an English training course for the local guides
- 1.7.6 A kind of a syllabus of an English training course on Rural Tourism and Homestay that corresponds to the needs of the local guides